

REMARKS

The Office Action dated September 14, 2007, has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments and the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

As a preliminary matter, the Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 24, 32 and 39.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since this Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance for reasons discussed herein; (b) does not raise any new issue regarding further search and/or consideration since the Amendment amplifies issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally-rejected claims; and (d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary because it is made in reply to arguments raised in the rejection. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 1 and 5 have been amended to further clarify the invention. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-9 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 24-26, 28, 32-36 and 39-43 have been amended, and claims 22, 29, 30, 37 and 44-46 have been canceled. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-21, 23, 27 and 31 have been previously canceled. Thus, claims 24-26, 28, 32-36 and 39-43 are pending in this application and subject to examination.

In the Office Action mailed September 14, 2007, claims 22, 25, 26, 28-30, 33-37 and 40-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mann et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,654,801 B2, hereinafter “Mann”) in view of Champlin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,519,635 B1, hereinafter Champlin). Claims 24, 32 and 39 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but the Office Action indicated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. It is noted that claims 24-26, 28, 32-36 and 39-43 have been amended, and claims 22, 29, 30, 37 and 44-46 have been canceled. To the extent the rejections remain applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, as follows.

Regarding amended claims 24, 32 and 39, the Applicants respectfully submit that these claims have been rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As indicated in the Office Action, these claims are now allowable over the cited art of record.

Regarding amended claims 25, 26, 28, 33-36 and 40-43, the Applicants respectfully submit that each of these claims is dependent from one of allowable claims 24, 32 and 39, and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the

Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below to schedule a personal or telephone interview to discuss any remaining issues.

In the event that this paper is not being timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account Number 01-2300, referencing Docket Number 026304-00002.

Respectfully submitted,



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